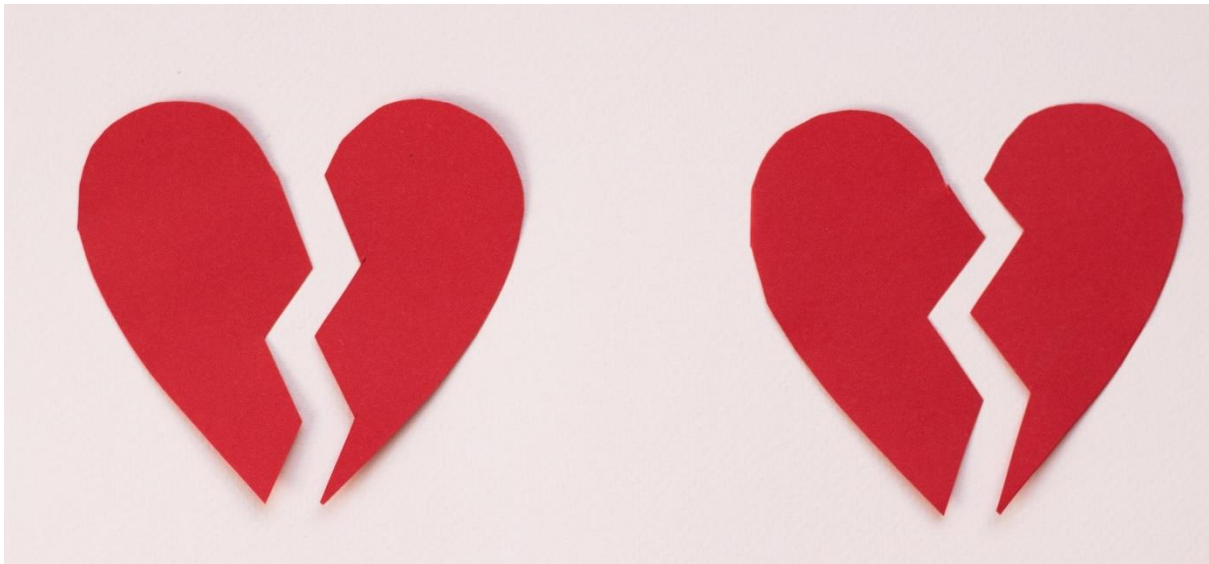


I Love God!

A Bible Study Lesson of The Mt. Zion Church

Pastor Ken Patterson, Ph.D.



Introduction: Our lives as Christians can at times seem routine in the sense that discipleship is a repetitive process. Each day we must choose to study God’s Word, pray, and simply be God’s people. The mundane, day-to-day, behaviors do not come with fanfare or hoopla. In fact, discipleship and living for Christ is like fitness training. You simply have to keep following the process and then somewhere down the line you wake up and you are better than you were at the beginning. As with all training, one must commit to some behaviors and reject others. A person must, in many ways, fall in love with their life in Christ and fall out of love with their old lifestyle.

We learn in scriptures such as John 4:4 and Romans 12: 2 that we should not love the world or be conformed to the world. James 1:27 even suggests that we are to work so we are not dirty or stained from the world. Jesus even posed the question in Matthew 16: 26 about the value of gaining the world and losing our soul. “What does it profit a man to gain the world...?” We are to seriously consider our love of worldly things over Godly living due to the outcomes it has on our relationship with The Lord. Today’s lesson is designed to help students understand that our love is to be towards a Godly life which rejects the temptation to love the world.

Key Verse: 1 John 2: 1-6; 15-17

2 ¹My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ²He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

Love and Hatred for Fellow Believers

³We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. ⁴Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. ⁵But if anyone obeys his word, love for God^[a] is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

¹⁵Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father^[d] is not in them. ¹⁶For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

Scriptural Context

The second chapter of 1 John begins with an amazing idea. The writer suggests that we can live purposefully with the goal of not sinning. “I write these things to you so that you won’t sin.” The possibility for readers to sin connects to where, what, and how we love. If our love is not founded in the right place, we will be guilty of sin. This warning serves as an opportunity for believers to do the right thing and make a course correction if they are off track. (We all have these moments.)

When the writer gets to verse 15, he brings in the idea that each of us must determine where we have our loyalties. The decision we make defines our true identity as followers of Christ or as people who have the label of Follower but not the lifestyle of a follower. With that in mind, the writer brings to the readers’ attention that we must decide to tell the world “I love God!”

I. Do Not Love the World

Loving the world is the idea that we have an inclination and desire for the order, structures, and ideas that are not of God. The world in this sense does not mean the rocks and dirt and trees we see. Rather it relates to systems and ideologies which we see presented to us. We are to hate and reject these ideologies and to cling to and love the commands of The Lord.

What are some attitudes or behaviors the world promotes that are clearly outlined as wrong in God’s word?

Why do you think we bend to what the world says? Psalm 51: 4-5 answers this question explicitly and is the condition of all mankind!

Psalm 51: 4-5

⁴Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. ⁵Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

We all are genetically predisposed to sin. It is in our nature! This is the need to become brand-new creatures.

Notice what David wrote about sin. He conceded that he was conceived into the desire to sin. Our very nature is to sin and be at odds with God. We are born in love with the world and all that it promotes.

We even set up systems which show our love of the world. This is seen In Matthew 5:43-45a where Jesus explained to his listeners the worldliness of their system of justice.

⁴³ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

⁴⁴ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

⁴⁵ That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven:

The system of the world had (and to some degree still has) defined the way people should treat one another. This system revolved around an eye for an eye attitude. Jesus came and redefined the system of treatment and declared that mankind's attitude of justice was far less than His. Jesus' attitude of justice and treatment of enemies was to show love and forgiveness and those who approached enemies in this manner represented their Father in heaven. Those who followed the man-made system of treatment of people did not reflect God or a love for God.

In this manner, Jesus promoted us exemplifying our love to God by following the command to love one another. John wrote in the current passage the following:

⁵But if anyone obeys his word, love for God^[a] is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

Therefore, I cannot claim love for God if I am clinging to behaviors that are not Christlike. I must live as Jesus did!

What are some other ideologies that we can identify as not reflecting Godly behavior? Think in terms of how the world defines certain categories:

Category	World view
Family	
Money	
Power	
Honesty	
Love	
Achievement	

II. Do Not Love Sinful Things vs. 16

The writer continues the theme of rejecting the world’s ideologies and attractions by presenting the reader with the formula that Satan uses to trick people into behaviors that do not honor God. These three, exactly match the temptation presented to Eve in Genesis 3:6.

In Genesis 3:6, Eve makes a worldly choice based on a lie that she believed. Notice the consistent approach Satan uses to entice us to question God’s purpose and plan for our lives.

1 John 2: 16	Genesis 3: 6
Lust of Flesh	It was “good for food”
Lust of Eyes	It was “pleasing to the eyes”
Pride of Life	It was “desirable for wisdom”

Satan uses these same tricks to tempt us to love what is emotionally or physically pleasing rather than what is pleasing to God. Consider the last time you were upset with someone in an uncontrolled manner. The behaviors you displayed provided an emotional release and a level of pleasure as you mistreated someone for

their actions rather than in love corrected them and restored them (see 2 Timothy 4:2 and Galatians 6: 1). The temptation to sin in many ways gives us immediate pleasure but puts us at odds with Christ.

The conclusion we must make is to hate the world and all that it offers. We must not have a longing for the lusts that the world offers.

Are you a person who will do anything to satisfy your flesh, your eyes, or your pride? These are hindering you and I from attaining the purpose God has set for us. We are as attempting to serve two masters which Matthew 6: 24 declares is an impossibility.



Which of the three lusts is the most difficult for you? _____
(flesh, eye, pride)

What do you need God to do to help you in this area? _____

III. Do Not Love What is Temporary! Vs. 17

The concluding thought for the verses of this lesson center on the idea that our goal should be for what is permanent rather than temporary. We are reminded that what we see around us and what we emotionally feel and experience is temporary.

To love what is temporary is to put our hopes and future in some possession, some person, some position, or some power that will be here today and gone tomorrow. John wrote, do not love temporary things because the world and its lusts will eventually end. We struggle with the future because we are so tied to our now and what we desire for now.

When was the last time your choice of now negatively impacted your future?

God is focused on our future as well as our now. He gives us now to use our lives in service to Him and others. He also gives us now to accept Jesus' salvation so that when the here and now ends (either Jesus returns or we die) our future will be secured.

Those who love the world will find that they put their hope and trust in something they could not hold onto nor cause to last longer than its appointed end. The world has no permanence. A Godly life does have permanence and when the world ends, those who loved the Lord will have an eternity to celebrate God's glory.

Conclusion: The love of the world is an option that Satan presents to us as something to be attained and held onto. The world is not the physical planet, rather it is the systems and possessions which we see in action daily. God's word teaches us that we must make a choice. Either we will love the world or we will love The Lord. In the words of Joshua, when he challenged the Israelites to commit to God fully, each of us must "Choose to love God or choose to love the world." Choose you this day! As for me and my house, we are not in love with the world anymore.